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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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~ .name Domain Starts! ~ E-snoop Bill Hits Snag ~ 'Gigger' Virus!
~ AOL Hikes Some Prices! ~ CT60 Test News! ~ AOL: Upgrade ICQ!
~ HP Board Slams Hewlett ~ New: Atari-Source.com! ~ DGEM Updated!

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->From the Editor's Keyboard
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

Well, we continue to be lucky here in New England with just a trace of snow on the ground! There wouldn't be anything if the temperatures rose a little bit. I don't know how long this good fortune will last, but I'll keep enjoying it while I can. Being a longtime New Englander, I realize that we'll "pay the price" eventually!

For some reason, I've been reminiscing about the "old days" pertaining to things Atari. As I mentioned around the end of the year, I had considered some sort of retrospective article, but at the time it didn't seem appropriate with everything else going on in the world. This past week I've seen a number of posts on the UseNet asking about, or talking about some old Atari BBSs still running. They brought back memories of my own Toad Hall BBS. I ran it for almost 13 years and I remembered the fun we had there. The internet pretty much killed the BBS community, as well as the lack of continued support for the various BBS software available.

But that talk reminded me of what I had wanted to mention a few weeks ago. For some reason, I started thinking about the various WAACE shows that I had attended over the years. I also remembered many of the people that I met down there, especially the likes of J.D. Barnes and company who worked so hard to make those shows a great success. And then I started to think of all the people I met at the shows, including the vendors and visitors. People like the CodeHeads, Gribnif, Dave Small, John Jainschigg, Clay Walnum, Chet Walters, Patti and Bill Rayl, and too many more to mention. Those really were terrific days for Atari users. I really miss those days; it was that kind of fondness for a computer platform that kept me enthusiastic. Once those kinds of events started to falter, so did my own enthusiasm. I've often wished I could afford to put on an AtariFest reunion and make it free for anyone to attend. I think that would take an act of god or a major winning lottery ticket to pull off these days! But it would be fun! I've often wondered what happened to all of these people that I met over the years. Well, enough of that - there's no re-living the past!

Until next time...

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Renaissance's DGEM 0.14

Bonjour :)

You can find the latest version 0.14 of DGEM
(embryo of Dungeon Master clone) on <http://rajah.atari.org>
(direct : <http://www.multimania.com/nef/files/dgem014.zip> 315Kb)

News: new harddisk friendly file format for the images, option
for PC keyboard, zoom function (experimental).

For the dungeon: doors, retractable walls, trap-doors, pads &
switches, teleporters, wall inscriptions.

Please be kind if you find bugs. Report them ;-)

Thanks to Daroou (building & bug report) and Mateo (support).

I will release the DGEM GFA sources and its editor next week.

Bye

Rajah Lone / Renaissance

CT60 Test News

Hello,

The 060 is now running at 80 MHz! This is a 60 MHz model and I will try
with a 50 MHz model as soon as possible...but it should work too.

I actually finished to solder a very small clock driver to do tries at
100 MHz.

The THERMAL sensor of the 060 is running well and we can read a temperature
of 47C for a 80 MHz 060 running a simple loop to read the temperature and
draw it on the screen (some flash accesses, TLV0831 accesses & videl
accesses).

Now the SDRAM is tested.

First test is the read of the EEPROM of the DIMM to get parameters to be
set into the SDR60 chip.

Rodolphe CZUBA

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Atari-Source.com Is In Full Swing

Hey everyone,

Atari-source.com is in full swing. There's new articles and updates daily, news, reviews, help-guides and debates. I work to make sure I release at least something new per day, making this a great place to go for daily news updates about things that are really relevant in the Atari user community. We are geared towards open source, and atari as a useful machine today which includes source code revisions, operating system updates and system hardware upgrades. We syndicate news from atari-users.net and I pull a lot of my news from great places like atari.org and the German site st-computer.net. This site is strictly American/English which is a refreshing change in the many language Atari community.

As the site is a lot of work I am looking for someone to help me administrate and add news and articles. Anyone up for the challenge?

I offer free advertising to any atari related COMMERCIAL or non-commercial product project or website. I don't think atari developers or users need to be held back with silly advertising fees.

That is pretty much all, so come check us out if you haven't already, <http://atari-source.com> If you have already, Thank you

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. It's been a long week. I don't know why exactly, but there's obviously some kind of Einsteinian time warp going on here.

Maybe it's because we've gotten our first real snow of the season here in southern New England, or maybe I'm just getting cabin fever. But this week seems like it's been ten or twelve days long.

The only other thing I want to mention before we get to the UseNet stuff is the Team Atari SETI@home search group. We have contributed almost SEVENTY years of CPU time to the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. We're not the biggest group, or the most active, but we keep on plugging along. And an extra 70 years of CPU time is nothing to sneeze at. You can check out who's in the group and how much CPU time they've "donated" at:
http://iosef.ssl.berkeley.edu/cgi-bin/cgi?cmd=team_lookup&name=Team+Atari

If you are interested in joining up, check out SETI@home's main page at:
<http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu>

Okay, as promised, here we go with the news and stuff from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
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JLensbo posts this about a BBS:

"The longest running (and STILL running) ATARI BBS I can find is:

PayBax BBS 302-454-7797

It runs on FoReM ST software, which is not Y2K compliant, so it thinks the year is 1990-something (complain to MATT SINGER).

I think it's been running for like 12 years now. Can anyone find an older one?"

Mike DePetrus tells J:

"Mine is running since 1989, running initially QuickBBS and now Octopus. Atarian ST - TS! [+39-040-8331217] 2:333/608@FidoNet

Ciao, *Mike* mikenews@triesterivista.it www.triesterivista.it"

Seizing the opportunity, Mark Duckworth tells Mike:

"I would like to get the source code to Octopus to implement a telnet interface to it such that we could all utilize the glory of the internet to continue and expand our atari bbs's. Also I think ConNect would be great with the ability to telnet with STiK. ssh would be even better. Just a thought. Anyone know how to get ahold of the ConNect author?"

Our own Editor in Chief, Dana Jacobson, tells 'the guys':

"It's amazing how many people ran BBSs back in the "old days"!! I ran Toad Hall from 1987 until about 1999. I started out with MichTron, but reluctantly went to RatSoft to be able to use a faster modem. I also started with a 20-meg drive and eventually had at least 1-gig and a CD-ROM. I hated to shut it down, but the internet and long-distance charges after I moved out of the city made it a dinosaur. Those were terrific days and I really miss the friends and activity because of the BBS."

Dave Krem asks about joysticks for his ST:

"I have an atari 1040STf, I'm wondering if these joysticks (which work on the 8-bit atari machines) will work on mine:
Quickshot 2 plus TAC30 TAC3

Also, how are they as far as joysticks go? Is a "classic" atari joystick a better bet (I was going to get one from ATY computers - what do they look and feel like)?"

Bill Freeman tells Dave:

"I think any 8 bit Atari joystick will work on an ST, but they aren't very good quality compared to some of the aftermarket sticks. My favorite are the Epyx and Wico units that nestle into your palm. One to avoid is the "Best" brand. It has lousy switches."

Bob Retelle adds:

"Any joystick that will work on an 8-bit Atari (or Commodore 64 for

that matter) will work on an Atari ST.

The "genuine" "classic" Atari joystick is my all-time favorite joystick.

They are fairly easily damaged, so you have to exercise some care when you're playing, but they are quite sensitive and responsive.

I've tried many, many other types and brands and have always come back to the "classic".

This is the same joystick that was originally shipped with the Atari 2600VCS video game system and the 8-bit Atari systems. It's also the one Commodore got in trouble over for copying (it was that good).

You'll probably recognize it when you see it."

Greg Goodwin adds his thoughts:

"I have several TAC30s. They are O.K., but not great. If money is no object, I'd recommend an adaptor to use a modern joystick intended for another system. If the 'old feel' is important, original 2600 era joysticks can still be found. I've picked up three in recent years."

Martin Tarenskeen tells us about his latest triumph:

"I finally traced a problem I was having when I tried to use XaAES in combination with SPIN. The problem lies in the order of execution of the vmoose.xdd and spin.xfs files. If spin.xfs is executed first, vmoose.xdd will not do it's work properly. You don't notice this at first, but XaAES crashes with an error message "/dev/moose not found". Then I removed both files from my mint folder, and copied them back. But this time with vmoose.xdd first and spin.xfs next. XaAES and SPIN now work perfectly together. Problem solved, but still: It shouldn't be like this.

These kind of problems should only happen with auto folder programs, not with xdd and xfs files in the mint/multitos folder. I don't know if SPIN, or XaAES, or MiNT is responsible for this strange bug. Because that's what it is, even though I have found a work around now."

Lyndon Amsdon tells Martin:

"Indeed the order shouldn't be a problem for xdd and xfs as I've been told, have you reported this to Henk?"

Henk jumps in and tells Lyndon simply:

"He did."

Hallvard Tangeraas asks about cross-platform file transfers:

"I'm working on my Notator FAQ again (http://www.notator.org/html/notator_faq.html) and am in the midst of updating the part about transferring files from other platforms over to the Atari ST.

As I have and use an Apple Mac myself I'm adding Mac specific problems/solutions to it, but I could need some help regarding transfers from PCs...

On the Mac, when a floppy disk is inserted in the drive, some Mac-specific files are created and stored on that disk (text/icon display mode, window size/position etc.). This causes no problem for the Atari ST, but it does use up some disk space which is why Mac users start wondering what's wrong when they get a "disk full" message before the files they're transferring actually take up all that space!

Now I'm wondering if there are similar issues with windoze on PCs? I seem to recall some talk a while back about windoze writing some stuff to floppy disks. Can someone please elaborate?
Any other issues one should be aware of except the obvious (using an MSDOS formatted floppy disk)?"

Bill Freeman tells Hallvard:

"I have used occasionally a PC at the local college to download Atari files. The only extra files I have seen a PC write to the disk are related to storing and recovering information about long filenames. The Atari OS doesn't need them, and gives a false determination of their size. The Atari says they are huge in size, but they are not, and can be deleted with no apparent effect to the Atari data.

I'm still looking for an efficient way to transfer files between Mac and Atari. So far, all I do is via floppies. Unfortunately, most of my Atari disks are formatted with extra tracks or sectors, and the Mac can't read them.

I'm wondering if HD Driver can format a hard drive that is readable by both Atari and Mac?

An good Ethernet solution for the TT would sure be nice. I have an ethernet/cable router that has a serial printer port. I thought I might try getting data to the TT via the serial port on the router. I don't expect it to work, but may be worth a try. I still haven't tried doing Mac to TT via the TT LAN port, which I've been told will work."

Hallvard asks Bill:

"Are filenames truncated to something along the lines of "THISISA~.TXT" where a "tilde" (~) character is inserted to show that it's been truncated?

I didn't know that the filenames changed in size if used long filenames. Are you saying that the file sizes aren't as big as they are shown (i.e. "view as text" on the Atari ST desktop) and the floppy reports "disk full" when there really is a lot of space left?

Or... do long filenames really take up a lot of extra disk-space?

What should I be looking for in order to find (and delete) those extra Windows specific files related to long names?

There's no windoze-specific data stored on the disks related to view options etc. such as on the Mac? (on a Mac, several Mac-specific files are created to store this sort of information. They're invisible on the Mac of course, but if you insert them in an Atari ST you'll see them, and can safely delete them. If you insert the disk in the Mac again, new Mac-specific files will be written. This is the reason why many a Mac user is surprised when they download something that should fill

exactly one disk doesn't!) I've written about this in the FAQ.

Yeah, it's a real pain. Several years ago I spent lots of time reformatting all my disks to MSDOS standards (using "Hcopy"), so I don't have that problem any longer. Then again I've transferred all my Atari software over to a (ISO-9660) CD which is very practical -all things in one place! The only situation where I can run into floppy disk problems, where it can't be read on the Mac is with original disks that I've bought. I don't want to mess around with those, so I insert them in the STe, copy the files over to the harddisk, format a blank disk to MSDOS, then copy the file back to that disk. A bit cumbersome, but fortunately I don't need to do that often.

Apparently later versions of HDdriver can allow a special format to be read on both STs and PCs, but I don't know the details. I'm sure Uwe Seimet will explain.

For connecting a harddisk to a Mac.... well, I've got MagicMac installed on my own Mac, and that allows you to connect standard Atari ST formatted SCSI hard disks to it! The drive isn't readable and even recognized on MacOS itself, but within MagicMac it works like a charm! I've used this a lot when transferring large amounts of data between the two machines, where floppy disks aren't practical.

I haven't tried anything like that yet, but as I also have a Mega STe which I believe has the same LAN port it might work here as well if you get yours to work."

Bill tells Hallvard:

"Yes, that's exactly what it does, insert a ~.

The files are essentially unchanged in size. There may be a few bytes one way or the other.

The PC added some cryptic filenames, I presume one for each file that contained some data. These extra filenames are apparently related to storing the long filename information. The added "name" files are shown by the Atari OS to be very large, but they are actually small. Apparently whatever is written there by the PC can't be calculated for file size by the Atari.

They will show up in the Atari file selector, if they are there. Maybe the later Microsoft OS doesn't even use them. It was about 5 years ago that I was seeing this on my disks, I think it was when Windows 95 was the OS. It has been that long since I used a PC to download files for my Atari.

I can't remember if they can be deleted directly or not. I don't remember having to reformat the disks to get them off. I'll see if I still have some floppies around with the extra filename info. It's been a while since I was doing this and don't remember all the details.

Thanks for the information about MagicMac. I did not know it would read an Atari hard disk. I just bought MagicMac v.2 but haven't read the manual or used it very much yet. I will see if it will read one of my external Atari hard drives."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Activision Acquires Wolfenstein Devs!
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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News      -   The Latest Gaming News!
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Activision also said a number of Gray Matter executives -- including studio head Drew Markham -- have signed employment contracts with Activision.

U.S. Nabs 30 Suspects in Antipiracy 'DrinkorDie' Raids

Federal investigators have turned up roughly 30 suspects and continue to raid college campuses a month after moving to shut down a massive software piracy ring, a Customs Service official said Monday.

Federal agents have not arrested any members of the "DrinkorDie" piracy ring but roughly 30 people, including an executive of a major company, have retained lawyers to negotiate settlements with the government, said Allan Doody, who is overseeing the antipiracy effort.

"We're in a situation where we're working with attorneys, the suspects aren't going anywhere," said Doody, a special agent in charge of the Customs Service's Baltimore-Washington office.

Doody told Reuters that agents were poised to raid an East Coast university Monday or Tuesday to search for more evidence.

Investigators have seized more than 200 computer hard drives believed to have been used by DrinkorDie members to distribute everything from computer operating systems like Windows XP to movies like "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," Doody said.

Justice Department officials said last month those found to be participating in the piracy ring could be charged with distribution of copyrighted material, which carries a maximum sentence of five years per count.

The Customs Service, working with other government agencies and five foreign countries, conducted more than 100 raids last month to break up the DrinkorDie ring.

The Customs Service estimates that the ring and other similar "Warez" groups are responsible for 95 percent of all pirated software online, causing at least \$1 billion in lost sales annually.

Federal agents have raided corporate offices and private residences, but have focused much of their efforts on college campuses, where computer networks often feature lots of available storage space and low security barriers.

DrinkorDie members stashed pirated software at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Duke University, the University of Oregon, the Rochester Institute of Technology, and the University of California at Los Angeles, Doody said.

Investigators have their hands full sifting through the mountains of data on the hard drives they have collected so far, he said.

"We're still trying to get a handle on that," he said.

Worm Posing as Microsoft Update Moving Slowly

A new computer worm masquerading as a software update from Microsoft Corp. is capable of deleting all files on the hard drive of an infected computer but has so far spread very slowly, an antivirus vendor said on Monday.

The so-called "Gigger" worm is a low threat since so few computers have been infected, said Vincent Gullotto, senior research director for Network

Associates Inc.'s Antivirus Response Team.

"It's a mass-mailer with a dangerous payload, but it's not in the wild," he said. "If it was to begin to spread it could cause significant problems."

Apparently, few people have been duped into opening the attachment, which has limited the spread of the worm, according to Gullotto.

The worm, a self-propagating virus, is written in Java Script and uses Microsoft Outlook, Outlook Express, and mIRC, Instant Relay Chat channels, to spread.

It arrives as an attachment to an e-mail that has a subject line of "Outlook Express Update," and sends itself to addresses in the address book as well as tries to delete all files on the hard drive, according to Gullotto.

AOL Urges Instant Messagers to Upgrade for Security

AOL on Monday urged users of older versions of its ICQ instant messaging program to upgrade to the latest version because of a new security hole that could leave computers vulnerable to hacking.

A bug has been found in the voice/video and games features in versions earlier than version 2001b of ICQ, which was released in October, said Andrew Weinstein, a spokesman for the Dulles, Virginia-based company.

The problem results when the application is flooded with more code than it can handle, triggering a so-called "buffer overflow" error and allowing extraneous code to be executed. That could allow someone to download malicious code onto a targeted computer.

People using older versions of ICQ can download the newest version from (<http://www.icq.com/download/>). Users of the newer version of ICQ do not have to make any changes, according to Weinstein.

The company has made some modification to its servers to mitigate the risk to affected users, he said.

"The exploit, to our knowledge, never has been used in the wild," Weinstein added.

A University of Pennsylvania student first discovered the hole and it was posted to Bugtraq, a security e-mail list, a week ago, he said.

There are 125 million registered users of ICQ, Weinstein said.

It is the second such security flaw to be found in AOL instant messaging software this month.

Two weeks ago a buffer overflow-related security hole was disclosed in AOL's other instant messaging program -- AOL Instant Messenger, also called AIM. That hole could allow a malicious hacker to take control of computers through AIM's advanced game-playing feature.

There are about 100 million registered AIM users, 29 million of which are

active users, according to an industry report.

Botched Update Puts Windows XP Updates On Hold

Engineers are working to fix a glitch in a Microsoft Web server that has prevented Windows XP users from downloading software updates, including a patch for a new security hole, a company spokeswoman said on Monday.

The problem, discovered last Thursday, was created when engineers attempted to update software on a server, she said, adding that it is expected to be corrected before Tuesday.

The spokeswoman said she could not confirm the number of people affected by the problem, but said about eight million people download Windows XP software updates each week.

The news doesn't bode well for Windows XP users who are at risk from two serious security holes announced by the Redmond, Wash., company last month.

The vulnerabilities could leave computers open to malicious hackers and at risk of being temporarily shut down from a denial-of-service attack or used in such an attack on other computers.

Under a denial-of-service attack, a server is flooded with so much Internet traffic that it's rendered inaccessible to legitimate traffic.

The holes were serious enough to prompt the FBI's National Infrastructure Protection Center to urge Windows XP users to disable the Universal Plug and Play feature that contains the holes.

The new operating system, released Oct. 25, has been touted by Microsoft as its most secure operating system ever.

'About Time' for Microsoft Security Plan

Computer security experts, who have long complained about holes in Microsoft Corp. software, said on Thursday they were pleased to see Chairman Bill Gates proclaim security as the highest priority after years of lip-service.

In an e-mail sent to Microsoft's 47,000 employees on Tuesday and released to the press Wednesday, Gates said focusing on the security of products, instead of new features, was vital to the success of the company's new .NET Web-based services strategy.

"It's about time," said Marc Maiffret, chief hacking officer at security firm eEye Digital Security, who discovered two security holes last month in Microsoft's new XP operating system, touted by Microsoft as its most secure ever.

"Because of Microsoft's dominant position in software, they have the ability to singularly affect the security of the Internet," said Bruce Schneier, chief technology of Counterpane Internet Security. "To have

Microsoft as a company focusing on security will make the Internet a safer place."

In the past, Microsoft dismissed criticism, arguing that customers demanded functionality and convenience over security. But an increase in the number of Microsoft-specific security problems over the past year have raised concerns just as the company begins rolling out its .NET platform.

The new software will not only make applications available over the Internet, but will increase the exposure of computer users to malicious hackers and viruses, experts say.

"They bet their whole company on the .NET strategy and if you can't trust Microsoft to sell you software on a CD-ROM you're certainly not going to trust them to provide you software online," said John Pescatore, research director at market research firm Gartner Inc.

As part of its new strategy, the Redmond, Washington-based software giant will provide security training to all 7,000 Windows developers over the next two to three weeks and examine all its Windows .NET server code, said Steve Lipner, Microsoft director of security assurance.

Microsoft executives acknowledge that the directive will require a huge cultural shift at the company.

"What we're doing is a mind-set change," said Pierre De Vries, director of advanced product development at Microsoft, who added that protecting the privacy of customer data would also be a priority.

Gates conceded in his memo that .NET could not succeed without the confidence of customers and an improvement in the company's reputation.

"Flaws in a single Microsoft product, service or policy not only affect the quality of our platform and services overall, but also our customers' view of us as a company," Gates said.

"If I were in his position I'd be kind of embarrassed about all the problems they've been having," said Richard M. Smith, a Boston-based Internet security and privacy consultant. "The security and privacy problems have been getting worse, not better."

Although Lipner said customers would notice changes in .NET server, experts said it would be a few years before the proof is in the products.

"It will be a lot of work, there's a lot of code there," said Gary McGraw, chief technology officer at Cigital, a Dulles, Virginia company that does software risk management.

While most viruses and security exploits affect Windows, last year two high-profile viruses, Code Red and Nimda, proved nasty for Microsoft Internet Information Server (IIS) users. Pescatore urged people to switch from IIS, while British-based insurance underwriter J.S.Wurzler previously had raised its rates for IIS users.

While generally lauding Gate's action, Pescatore said he hopes Microsoft will do more to make it difficult for computer users to get themselves in trouble. For example, they should ship Windows XP with the personal firewall turned on, instead of the default off setting.

"We'll truly have seen proof of change when they start proactively

releasing advisories on security holes they've discovered themselves," Maiffret said, somewhat skeptically, of Microsoft.

HP Board Slams Walter Hewlett

Hewlett-Packard on Friday released a letter to shareholders bashing dissident board member Walter Hewlett for his opposition to the company's planned acquisition of Compaq Computer.

"Walter Hewlett, an heir of HP co-founder Bill Hewlett, is a musician and academic who oversees the Hewlett family trust and foundation," the letter states. "While he serves on HP's board of directors, Walter has never worked at the company or been involved in its management. His motivations and investment decisions are likely to be very different from your own."

HP is fighting to gain shareholder approval of the deal amid opposition from Walter Hewlett and other members of the Hewlett and Packard families and their foundations--who collectively hold roughly 18 percent of HP's shares.

Assuming the family members don't change their opinion, HP will need roughly two-thirds of remaining shareholders to support the deal. Although HP has been making its case in regulatory filings, press releases and an advertising campaign, Friday's letter is its first direct appeal to individual shareholders.

The letter, which comes amid a two-day meeting of HP's board of directors, is signed by the entire board, with the exception of Walter Hewlett. It is the latest in the escalating war of words over the multibillion-dollar deal and comes two days after Walter Hewlett penned a letter of his own to HP shareholders.

A representative for Hewlett said he had not seen the HP letter and could not immediately comment on it.

Before the proposed merger was announced on Labor Day, Hewlett voted in favor of the merger as a board member. But in November, he publicly came out in opposition to it, followed a day later by David Woodley Packard, son of HP co-founder David Packard.

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, HP's largest shareholder, announced in December its preliminary decision to oppose the deal.

In Friday's letter, HP said it spent two years exploring various alternatives and reiterated why the board believes the Compaq deal is HP's best alternative.

"The problem isn't just that he is saying 'no' to the merger--he's giving us nothing to say 'yes' to," the letter states. "While opposing the merger, he has failed to propose any alternatives that your board hasn't already analyzed, debated and rejected because they fail to create sufficient shareowner value."

The company repeated its contention that the deal will add \$5 to \$9 per share in value by cutting \$2.5 billion in costs.

"This sounds like a good deal because it is," the letter states.

Internet Suffix for Individuals Starts

The first Internet address suffixes created exclusively for individuals on Tuesday join the familiar ".com" and ".org" domain names.

Currently, Internet users with personal Web sites tend to use ".org," which is commonly associated with nonprofits.

Operators of ".name" are hoping individuals will be lured by e-mail and Web addresses featuring their own names.

The London-based Global Name Registry, which in 2000 proposed and won rights to administer the suffix, is also exploring expanding ".name" to mobile phones and other personal devices later this year.

"We think the personal space is in its infancy," said Andrew Tsai, the registry's chief executive.

The ".name" suffix was one of seven approved in November 2000 by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, an Internet oversight body. They are the first major additions to the domain name system since its creation in the mid-1980s.

The new names were approved to help relieve domain name overcrowding. Registration of ".com," ".net" and ".org" names more than tripled in 2000, ending the year at 28.2 million.

But tackling the details of actually creating the new suffixes took much longer than expected. In the meantime, the Internet economy slid, and names lost much of their speculative value.

Total domain name registrations increased only slightly in 2001, a 13.5 percent jump to 32 million as of September.

Ross Stevens of New York got ".name" addresses for himself, his wife and a 6-month-old daughter. He plans to set up a Web page with baby pictures and to use ".name" for lifetime e-mail addresses.

The service costs about \$30 a year for both e-mail and Web addresses. The fee is for the name only; the user still would have to set up an e-mail account or buy Web space from an Internet service provider.

Two other suffixes, ".biz" for businesses and ".info" for informational sites, debuted last fall, with more than 1.2 million names registered combined.

In addition, ".museum" began operating in November on a provisional basis, meaning assigned names may still change, and ".coop" for business cooperatives became active Jan. 9. A few thousand names have been requested under each.

Debuting later this year are ".aero" for aviation and ".pro" for professionals.

The Global Name Registry began allowing pre-registrations in earnest last month for ".name" suffixes. For duplicate names requested as of Dec. 17,

one was selected at random. The first batch of 60,000 names was to be activated Tuesday.

Additional rounds will be activated every two weeks or less until ``live" registration begins in mid-May.

Tsai said the slow rollout should help the ``.name" registry avoid some of the troubles that ``.biz" and ``.info" faced.

The ``.info" registry failed to block some bogus trademark claims, while the ``.biz" operators were hit with a lawsuit charging that their procedures amounted to an illegal lottery. Both ``.info" and ``.biz" changed their procedures to address the concerns.

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The seven new domain names:

``.info" - For informational sites. Became operational Sept. 23, with more than 700,000 registered so far. Early problems with speculators jumping ahead of queue by claiming bogus trademark ownership. To rectify, operators of ``.info" plan to refer as many as 10,000 registrations this week to arbitrators at the World Intellectual Property Organization.

``.biz" - For businesses only. Became operational Oct. 1. Lawsuit challenged registration process, calling it illegal lottery. To address concerns, operators changed procedures for handling names for which more than one application was received. More than 500,000 names registered through mid-December.

``.name" - Individuals can register a name in form of
``firstname.lastname.name" for Web sites and
``firstname(at)lastname.name" for e-mail addresses. About 60,000 names were to be activated Tuesday.

``.museum" - Names for some museums were approved provisionally in November. Some names work now, but the suffix becomes formally operational in March. Names subdivided by location as in ``sanfrancisco.museum" and type of museum as in ``maritime.museum." Index available at <http://index.museum>.

``.aero" - For aviation industry. Registration begins in March.

``.coop" - For business cooperatives, such as credit unions and electric coops. Some preregistered names became active earlier this month. Regular registration begins Jan. 30.

``.pro" - For professionals, initially doctors, lawyers and accountants. Individuals and companies requesting names must show proof. Details still being negotiated.

Court Settles Internet Pricing Suit

In a victory for the cable industry, the Supreme Court said Wednesday that a federal agency can control rates that cable companies pay for high-speed Internet lines. The ruling could affect the availability and cost of online services.

Cable television companies pay utilities to attach wires for high-speed Internet service to the utilities' poles.

A federal appeals panel had ruled that the Federal Communications Commission did not have the authority to regulate pole rental rates for Internet service. The Supreme Court reversed that decision.

"It's a good thing for the public. It makes it more likely high-speed Internet access will get into their hands faster," said Randal C. Picker, a law professor at the University of Chicago.

Cable industry spokesman said Dan Brenner said the decision "overcomes a potential impediment to broadband deployment, especially in rural areas."

Justices also said cellular telephone companies are entitled to pay government-limited rates for attaching their equipment to utility poles.

Picker said there is a downside to the decisions. "It will make more clutter on telephone poles. It will become more crowded and a little more unsightly."

Justice Clarence Thomas, joined by Justice David H. Souter, dissented in part of the ruling. Thomas said the FCC should be required to explain its rationale for regulating rates.

"Such a determination would require the commission to decide at long last whether high-speed Internet access provided through cable wires constitutes cable service or telecommunications service or falls into neither category," Thomas wrote.

The case is one of three the court is considering this year involving a 1996 congressional overhaul of the nation's telecommunications laws.

Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, writing for the majority, said electric utilities wrongly argued in this case that "if a cable company attempts to innovate at all and provide anything other than pure television, it loses the protection of the Pole Attachments Act and subjects itself to monopoly pricing."

Kennedy said Congress in 1996 intended to promote expanded Internet service, not discourage it.

With government regulation of the rates, the cable industry paid about \$5 a pole annually to string and operate its wires, according to the National Cable and Telecommunications Association. After the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in 2000, one utility began charging \$38 a pole, the association had said.

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor did not participate in the decision. She has stock in companies that could be affected by the court's ruling, including telephone companies AT&T and MCI, and several computer or Internet firms.

The cases are National Cable Television Association v. Gulf Power Co., 00-832, and Federal Communications Commission v. Gulf Power Co., 00-843.

America Online said Wednesday that it plans to raise the monthly subscription fee for people accessing its features using a different Internet service provider.

Dubbed "Bring Your Own Access" (BYOA), AOL in October 2001 increased the service's monthly fee by 50 percent to \$14.95, but it allowed existing members to continue paying \$9.95 a month. Now, AOL is preparing to charge all BYOA members \$14.95 a month for the service.

The price change will begin in March 2002.

The price hike is happening just as AOL, the online division of AOL Time Warner, falls under scrutiny for sagging revenue because of the collapse of advertising dollars. AOL Time Warner executives have said the division will be hit particularly hard in the first two quarters of 2002. Executives are not factoring revenue growth for the AOL division into their budgets.

AOL would not say whether the price change has any relationship with its current revenue trouble.

"This price plan is going to help fund continued investment in the AOL service," said AOL spokesman Nicholas Graham.

About 1 million out of AOL's 33 million members currently access the service through the BYOA plan. The plan was created five years ago; this is the first change in pricing for existing members.

The majority of AOL's 33 million members pay \$23.90 a month for flat-rate access.

Given the state of AOL's advertising dollars, any potential revenue increase does not hurt the division. Jordan Rohan, an equity analyst at SoundView Technology Partners, expects the change boost its incremental cash flow by \$35 million next year, factoring in subscribers who leave.

"This is an easy way for AOL to exercise its market power," said Rohan. "Very few companies can increase price in this type of economic environment. AOL is one company that's been able to do so."

EBay Raises Auction Fees

EBay Inc. on Thursday raised fees on its popular Web auction service.

The rate hikes, which will go into effect on January 31, mark only the third time eBay has increased fees to people selling items on its site.

Under the new pricing structure, "final value fees" will be increased by 0.25 percent, and will range from a total fee of 5.25 percent on items selling for \$25 or less up to 1.5 percent for those sold for \$1,000 and more.

Reserve fees, which let sellers set a minimum sale price, will be increased from \$1 to \$2 on items worth more than \$200, and a new 5 cent fee will apply to the "buy it now" feature, which enables sellers to offer an item at a fixed price, instead of at auction.

EBay will also increase final value fees on cars sold at eBay motors to \$40 from \$25.

EBay, which did not suffer any significant loss in business from its prior fee increases, said the rate hikes will help it put more money into marketing, technical upgrades, and customer support.

Safa Rashtchy, an analyst with U.S. Bancorp Piper Jaffray, said the new fees could increase eBay's revenues by at least 10 percent, beginning in its second quarter.

E-snoop Bill Runs Aground

A bill that would give California law-enforcement officials unprecedented power to monitor the e-mail and phone conversations of suspected criminals has hit a roadblock.

A state body that provides legal opinions on pending bills has determined that such wide-ranging surveillance would run afoul of federal laws.

A provision of the bill, which is sponsored by state Assemblyman Carl Washington and backed by Gov. Gray Davis, proposes giving law enforcement the ability to use "roving" wiretaps on any phone a suspected criminal may potentially use.

But the Legislative Counsel of California said state law-enforcement officials are not authorized under federal law to use roving wiretaps, even though federal law-enforcement officials may do so. State lawmakers will probably revise the bill to comply with federal law.

California's efforts to expand the surveillance powers of its law-enforcement agencies come as federal lawmakers try to make it easier for law enforcement to snoop on people's electronic habits in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks.

In October, President Bush signed the USA Patriot Act, which expands law enforcement's ability to monitor electronic communications, in an effort to thwart terrorism.

But civil libertarians have protested both that act and the California bill, saying the two could violate the privacy and rights of citizens who are not under investigation, and allow abuses to go unchecked.

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